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THE  
FACE  
OF THE  
NIGHT

FORD M. HUEFFER

Harvard College Library



FROM THE  
KENNETH MATHESON TAYLOR  
FUND

GIVEN IN 1899 BY  
JESSIE TAYLOR PHILIPS

IN MEMORY OF HER BROTHER  
KENNETH MATHESON TAYLOR  
(Class of 1890)

FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE





## THE FACE OF THE NIGHT

*a*

*d*

By the Same Author  
POEMS FOR PICTURES

LONDON: JOHN MACQUEEN  
49 RUPERT STREET, W.

THE LIFE OF MADOC  
BROWN  
THE CINQUE PORTS  
D. G. ROSSETTI:  
A CRITICAL MONOGRAPH

In Collaboration with  
Joseph Conrad  
THE INHERITORS  
ROMANCE: A NOVEL

# The Face of the Night

A SECOND SERIES OF  
POEMS FOR PICTURES

BY

FORD M. HUEFFER



London  
JOHN MACQUEEN  
49 RUPERT STREET, W.  
1904

23638, 2.34.5



Taylor friend

[Of the larger poems in this volume "The Mother" appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*; the shorter ones have all been published in the *Athenaeum*, the *Academy*, the *Outlook* and other weekly journals, or in the *Pall Mall Magazine* and similar monthlies. I have to make the usual acknowledgments to the Editors in question.—F. M. H.]

▼

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# The Face of the Night

## A Pastoral

"The men of Gnossos have a legend that a man lying all night in the marshes near that town may see a face looking down upon him out of the sky. Such a man shall ever after be consumed with a longing to see again that face. In pursuit of it he shall abandon his home, his flocks and his duty to the State. And such men are accounted blasphemers because they infect others with this fever and are harmful to the republic."

*[A wide, stony plain, the bed of a river, but dry and brown because it is the heart of summer. Towards sunset. In the distance against the sky there rise the columns of a deserted temple and of poplar trees with, at their bases, a tangle of rosebushes and of underwood among fallen stones. To the right, far off, is a rocky bluff, purple against the evening: at its foot, very clear and small, are large fallen rocks round a green pool and spreading and shadowy trees. Small fires glimmer here. To the left the plain opens out towards the horizon, wide, suave and level; at the verge is a shimmer of the broad curve of the river.*

*In the foreground a young man lies upon*

## *The Face of the Night*

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*two fleeces. A fillet has fallen from his hair, his limbs are a golden brown, he has a leopard skin about his loins. His hands are clasped behind his head, he looks up into the western sky, his eyes searching for the first planet to shine. Over the plain from the sunset and from the sheepfolds in the shadow of the bluff, young girls and shepherds come towards him in knots. Some play upon pipes, others cry out from band to band, a horn sounds faintly with a guttural intonation. A dog's bark winds sharply from a distance, and there is a continual drone of gnats in the still air.*

### *The Young Man (listlessly).*

I have seen the Night with her hair  
gemma'd with stars,  
With her smile the Milky Way, and her  
locks the darker bars  
Of the Heavens. . . .

### *The Shepherds and the Young Girls.*

Oh, come away,  
For Lalagé is thine.

*He.*

With her pale face of stars  
I have seen her.

*They.*

Rise ! The shine  
Of the owl-light's on the pools,

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And the hinds bring skins of wine,  
And the hot day cools  
To its close.

[*The drone of the pipes and the quivering of strings still sound as others come across the plain. They come closer, and, standing round, obscure the sky from him.*

*He (rising on one elbow).*

Ah ! still your pipes, still the  
cyther string that jars,  
For I have seen the Night with her face of  
stars.

*The Men.*

Rise up and quit these places, for in shadows  
Lalagé  
Doth await thee.

*The Girls.*

Quit your fleeces, for in the  
shadows we  
In the light of nuptial torches where the  
poplars bar the sky,  
Thro' the rocks around the pool, thro' the  
hyacinths shall. . . .

*He.*

I, . . . .  
I have seen, have seen. . . .

*An Old Man (hastening upon them).*

Why never,  
Quit these places full of fever.



## THE FACE OF THE NIGHT

*a*

## *The Face of the Night*

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Thirst. I thirst.

*Two Girls (with horns slung from their shoulders).*

Here is milk. Here wine.

*He.*

Begone and send me that wind to drink  
That cools its flood on the glacier's brink,  
Send me that wind.

*The Old Man (persuasively).*

Thy Lalage's grown kind:  
Sighs fill the air near her, and from her eyes,  
Where low she lies upon the filmy fleeces,  
Bright tears down fall into the milk-white  
creases,  
And warm, dark valleys of her snowy kirtle.  
And loosely tied her girdle. . . .

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Thy white ewe hath burst her hurdle,  
Thy grey bitch hath tree'd a leopard,  
Shepherd, shepherd,  
Thy black heifer's milk doth curdle.

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I am sick of sheep and shepherds.

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Thou hast led us in the wars !

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Round her feet the grasses whisper, round  
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Form a beacon, you shall harbour in her  
soft, warm arms.

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We'll go dancing where  
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Showing here a foam-white shoulder, white  
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I must voice you in the counsels of the aged  
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I have seen the Night with her hair  
gemm'd with stars,  
With her smile the Milky Way, and her  
locks the darker bars  
Of the Heavens. . . .

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Oh, come away,  
For Lalagé is thine.

*He.*

With her pale face of stars  
I have seen her.

*They.*

Rise ! The shine  
Of the owl-light's on the pools,

## *The Face of the Night*

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And the hinds bring skins of wine,  
And the hot day cools  
To its close.

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*He (rising on one elbow).*

Ah ! still your pipes, still the  
cyther string that jars,  
For I have seen the Night with her face of  
stars.

*The Men.*

Rise up and quit these places, for in shadows  
Lalagé  
Doth await thee.

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Quit your fleeces, for in the  
shadows we  
In the light of nuptial torches where the  
poplars bar the sky,  
Thro' the rocks around the pool, thro' the  
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*He.*

I have seen, have seen. . . .

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Why never,  
Quit these places full of fever.

---

---

### *The Face of the Night*

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*He.*

I did see a face look downwards  
Thro' the stars.

*Old Man.*

No, never, never.

*He.*

I did see. . . .

*Old Man (seeking to drown his voice).*

Mists from the river.

*A Young Girl's voice (she sings as she comes along).*

When he comes from seawards,  
When he comes from townwards,  
My love sings to me words  
That my heart likes well.

*The Men (to him).*

We will bear thee on our shoulders  
Through the covert-sides and boulders  
With thy fleeces for a litter.

*The Girls.*

Unto where the watch-fires glitter  
On our shoulders we will bear thee  
To where Lalagé shall rear thee  
'Twixt her breasts.

## *The Face of the Night*

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*He.*

A face looked downwards,  
And I thirst, I thirst, am thirsting.

*The Old Man (in a threatening whisper).*

Close thy lips on this for ever.  
This is blasphemy. 'Twould sever  
Life and love and earth from gladness.  
Close thy lips. I know this madness.  
I am ancient.

*He.*

I am thirsting.

*A Young Man.*

Thy Lalagé's eyes are pools of rest,  
Thy Lalagé's lips are sweet warm grapes  
I would it were mine to taste and taste.

*A Young Girl.*

And thy Lalagé's heart is bursting.

*The Young Man.*

I would it were mine to sink and sink  
Between her breasts like hills of wine.  
I would it were mine  
Her lips to taste,  
And to clasp her hips and to clasp her  
waist,  
And to drink her breath and to be the first  
To . . .

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Here is milk. Here wine.

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That cools its flood on the glacier's brink,  
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Sighs fill the air near her, and from her eyes,  
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Bright tears down fall into the milk-white  
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And warm, dark valleys of her snowy kirtle.  
And loosely tied her girdle. . . .

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Thy white ewe hath burst her hurdle,  
Thy grey bitch hath tree'd a leopard,  
Shepherd, shepherd,  
Thy black heifer's milk doth curdle.

*He (with a weary and passionate gesture  
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I am sick of sheep and shepherds.

*The Men.*

Thou hast led us in the wars !

## *The Face of the Night*

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And the fairest of us maidens opens out to  
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Round her feet the grasses whisper, round  
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Form a beacon, you shall harbour in her  
soft, warm arms.

### *He.*

I did see a face with for hair the darker bars  
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We'll go dancing where  
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With the lances of the starlight and the grove  
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Showing here a foam-white shoulder, white  
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loves caress our feet,  
Burnt-out torches, rustling silence, and the  
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I must voice you in the counsels of the aged  
king, my father?  
I shall lead the ships to sewards, I must  
guard the flocks from townwards?

## *The Face of the Night*

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(*To the Girls.*)

I must bed your fairest maidens that the rest  
may dance in cadence?  
So that wine may flow in plenty, so your  
loves and you content ye,  
Whilst with chitons loose on shoulders in  
the twilight of the boulders  
And in secret dells. . . .

Ye wantons! I have seen  
a face look downwards,  
Pure and passionless and distant where with  
stars the pure sky teemeth.

## *The Old Man*

He blasphemeth, he blasphemeth.

*He.*

I am sick of vine-wreathed barrels,  
Sick of lances, arrows, quarrels,  
Sick of tracking in the dew,  
Of their limbs, and breasts, and you. . .  
I have seen that face of faces,  
I have thought the utter thought.

[*He rises to his feet.*  
I go to seek in desert places.

[*Whilst he speaks the men heave up  
stones to throw at him. The girls  
shake their hands and cry out. He  
silences them, shaking his fist. The  
OLD MAN runs about behind  
whispering to one and another.*

## *The Face of the Night*

---

*(To the Girls.)*

All your sun-tanned arms are nought,  
All their lances and your dances,  
Nought and nought. . . . And I must  
wander  
Past the mountains of Iskander,  
Past the salt-glazed lakes of Meinë,  
Past Pahán mist-veiled and rainy,  
Whither? Whither? Ah, my Fortune?  
Seeking her I must importune  
All the icy ghosts of souls  
That died of frost, and all the ghouls  
That feed in battle-clouds,  
The fiery spirits in the shrouds  
Above volcanoes and the spirits of the dawn  
That sing in choirs. And where the caverns  
yawn  
Which let out sleep, and death, and shame,  
and leprosy  
Upon this earth, you may find trace of me  
But here no more.

## *The Old Man.*

Blasphemy! Blasphemy!  
He doth contemn this godlike life of ours.

## *The Girls.*

Blasphemy! Blasphemy!  
He doth condemn our warm, sweet mid-  
night hours.

## *The Face of the Night*

---

*He (moving away from the plain).*

I must go seek her on the icy rocks,  
Frost in my blood or flame about my head,  
Calling and calling where the echo mocks,  
Crying in the midnights where the ocean  
moans

White in the darkness. . . .

*[A man casts a great stone that strikes  
him on the shoulder. He falls on  
to one knee.]*

Fool, though I be dead  
All here is nothing, but in her fair places  
My shade shall find her wisdom.

## *The Girls.*

Stones ! Cast stones !

*[A shower of stones strikes him down.  
He cries from the ground.]*

All here is nothing. Whilst each mountain  
traces  
Shadows half-circling from every worthless  
dawn,  
My shade shall trace her to her twilight  
portal,  
Then, on a hill-top, on a shadowy lawn,  
Plain in the dew her footsteps !

*The Old Man (striking a lance through his  
side).*

Dead !

## *The Face of the Night*

---

*He (gasping).*

Immortal  
Goddess ! Wisdom ! Face o' Night ! Be-  
yond the twilight bars. . . .

[*He dies.*

*The Old Man (striking the spear through  
him again).*

Cast stones !

*The Girls (to the men).*

Cast stones !

[*They gather stones in their skirts and  
drop them in a great number on to  
the body, until it has the resem-  
blance of a cairn. Whilst they  
hurry about the Old Man speaks  
to any that will listen to him.*

For that this was a Prince raise him a  
tomb,

Casting your stones on it. In sun nor  
gloom

Come never here again. . . . Here shall be  
moans

And whisperings of blasphemy to hear were  
doom. . .

Cast there, stones there, above his lips that  
lied.

So be his name forgotten. . . . Never a word  
From henceforth of his dying. This true  
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soft, warm arms.

### *He.*

I did see a face with for hair the darker bars  
Of the heavens. . . .

### *The Girls (seeking to drown his voice).*

We'll go dancing where  
the torchlights meet  
With the lances of the starlight and the grove  
is shadowiest,  
Showing here a foam-white shoulder, white  
waved arm and red lit breast,  
As the barebells brush our ankles till our  
loves caress our feet,  
Burnt-out torches, rustling silence, and the  
night wind faint and sweet.

### *He (turning upon his elbow towards the men).*

I shall lead you with your lances when you  
face the men of Hather?  
I must voice you in the counsels of the aged  
king, my father?  
I shall lead the ships to sewards, I must  
guard the flocks from townwards?

### *A Sequence*

---

Oh life of my heart, oh intimate solace of  
me . . .  
So, when the landward breeze winds up  
from the quickening sea,  
And the leaves quiver of a sudden and life  
is here and the day,  
You shall fade away and pass  
As—when we breathed upon your mirror's  
glass—  
Our faces died away.

## *A Sequence*

---

### IV

IF we could have remembrance now  
And see, as in the winter's snow  
We shall, what's golden in these hours,  
The flitting, swift, intangible desires of sea  
and strand !

Who sees what's golden where we stand ?  
The sky's too bright, the sapphire sea too  
green ;  
I, I am fevered, you cold-sweet, serene,  
And . . . and . . .

Yet looking back in days of snow  
Unto this olden day that's now,  
We'll see all golden in these hours  
This memory of ours.

## *A Sequence*

---

### V

IT was the Autumn season of the year  
When ev'ry little bird doth ask his mate :  
"I wonder if the Spring will find us here,  
It groweth late."

I saw two Lovers walking through the  
grass,  
And the sad He unto his weeping Dear  
Did say, "Alas !  
When Spring comes round I shall no  
more be here,  
For I must sail across the weary sea  
And leave the waves a-churn 'twixt you  
and me.

"Oh, blessed Autumn ! blest late Autumn-  
tide !  
For ever with thy mists us Lovers hide.  
Ignore Time's laws  
And leave thy scarlet haws  
For ever on the dewy-dripping shaws  
Of this hillside.  
Until the last, despite of Time and Tide,

### *A Sequence*

---

Give leave that we may wander in thy  
mist,  
With the last, dread  
Word left for aye unsaid  
And the last kiss unkisst."

*It was the Autumn season of the year,  
When ev'ry little bird doth ask his mate :  
"I wonder if the Spring will find us here,  
It groweth late."*

*A Sequence*

---

VI

WHEN all the little hills are hid in snow,  
And all the small brown birds by frost are  
    slain,  
And sad and slow the silly sheep do go  
All seeking shelter to and fro ;  
    Come once again  
To these familiar, silent, misty lands ;  
    Unlatch the lockless door  
    And cross the drifted floor ;  
Ignite the waiting, ever-willing brands,  
    And warm thy frozen hands  
    By the old flame once more.  
Ah, heart's desire, once more by the old  
    fire stretch out thy hands.

### **The Great View**

UP here, where the air's very clear,  
And the hills slope away nigh down to the  
bay,  
It is very like Heaven. . . .  
For the sea's wine-purple and lies half  
asleep  
In the sickle of the shore, and serene in the  
west,  
Lion-like, purple and brooding in the even,  
Low hills lure the sun to rest.

Very like Heaven. . . . For the vast marsh  
dozes,  
And waving plough-lands and willowy  
closes  
Creep and creep up the soft south steep.  
In the pallid North the grey and ghostly  
downs do fold away.  
And, spinning spider-threadlets down the  
sea, the sea-lights dance  
And shake out their wavering radiance.

Very like Heaven. . . . For, a shimmering  
of pink,  
East, far east, past the sea-lights' distant  
blink,

### *The Great View*

---

Like a cloud shell pink, like the ear of a  
girl,  
Like Venice-glass mirroring mother-o'-  
pearl,  
Like the small pink nails of my lovely lady's  
fingers,  
Where the skies drink the sea and the last  
light lies and lingers  
There is France.

### **On the Hills**

KEEP your brooding sorrows for dewy-misty hollows.  
Here's blue sky and lark song, drink the air. The joy that follows  
Draughts of wine o' west wind, o' north wind, o' summer breeze,  
Never grape's hath equalled from the wine hills by the summer seas.  
Whilst the breezes live, joy shall contrive,  
Still to tear asunder, and to scatter near and far  
Those nets small and thin  
That spider sorrows spin  
In the brooding hollows where no breezes are.

## **Sidera Cadentia**

**(ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA)**

WHEN one of the old, little stars doth fall  
from its place,  
    The eye,  
Glimpsing aloft must sadden to see that its  
space  
    In the sky  
Is darker, lacking a spot of its ancient,  
shimmering grace,  
And sadder, a little, for loss of the glimmer  
on high.

Very remote, a glitter, a mote far away, is  
    your star,  
But its glint being gone from the place  
where it shone  
The night's somewhat grimmer and some-  
thing is gone  
Out of the comforting quiet of things as  
they are.

    A shock,  
A change in the beat of the clock ;  
And the ultimate change that we fear feels  
a little less far.

### Night Piece

AH, of those better tides of dark and  
melancholy—  
When one's abroad, in a field—the night  
very deep, very holy ;  
The turf very sodden a-foot, walking heavy  
—the small ring of light,  
O' the lanthorn one carries, a-swinging to  
left and to right,  
Revealing a flicker of hedgerow, a flicker  
of rushes—and Night  
Ev'rywhere ; ev'rywhere sleep and a hush-  
ing to sleep—  
I know that I never shall utter the utter-  
most secrets aright,  
They lie so deep.

## Thanks whilst Unharnessing

### I

*(He gets down from the cart.)*

WEST'RING the last of silver light doth  
gleam,  
Whilst in the welling shimmer of the lamp  
From the tired horse the blanketing of  
steam  
Flickers and whirls aloft into the damp  
Sharp winter darkness. In the deadened  
air  
The long, still night doth settle everywhere.  
And hark! there comes<sup>1</sup> the rapt, sweet,  
crooning snatches  
Of song from where the little robin watches  
Close in the thorn, beyond the ring of  
light.

### II

*(He speaks towards the bushes.)*

Softest of all the birds that sing at night,  
For the most mellowest sound,  
That the long year brings round,  
Sweet robin, I give thanks and love you  
best  
Of birds that nest.

## Thanks

---

*(He follows the horse in, humming.)*

Sing ! it is well, though the rest of life be bitter,

Sing ! (*I swill the oats in the trough and loose the girth.*)

Warble ! It is well. (*There's a rustle in the litter :*

*That's the old grey rat.*) It is well upon the earth.

### III

Cloht-up and snug and warm, a-munching oats

Old Tom doth make a comfortable sound, A rhythmic symphony for your sweet notes.

*(He speaks from the stable door.)*

Small brother, fit in here, since all around The frost hath gripped the ground ;

And oh ! I would not like to have you die. We's help each other

Little Brother Beady-eye.

*(The Robin fits in.)*

There—Sing ! Warm and mellow the lanthorn lights the stable.

*Little brother, sing ! In-a-doors beside the hearth.*

Slippers are a-toast, and the tea's upon the table.

*Robin when you sing it is well upon the earth.*

*(He closes the stable door and enters the cottage.)*

## Grey Matter

*She.* They leave us nothing.

*He.* Still, a little's left.

*She.* A crabbèd, ancient, dried biologist,  
Somewhere very far from the sea, closed  
up from the sky,

Shut in from the leaves, destroys our hopes  
and us.

*He.* Why, no, our hopes and . . .

*She.* In his "Erster Heft,"  
Page something, I forget the line, he says  
That, hidden as deep in the brain as he  
himself from hope,

There's this grey matter.

*He.* Why, 'tis there, dear heart.

*She.* That, if that hidden matter cools,  
decays,

Dies—what you will—our souls die out as  
well ;

Since, hidden in the millionth of a cell,  
Is all we have to give us consciousness.

*He.* Suppose it true.

*She.* Ah, never ; better die,  
Better have never lived than face this mist,  
Better have never toiled to such distress.

## *Grey Matter*

---

*He.* It matters little.

*She.* Little!—Where shall I,  
The woman, where shall you take part,  
My poet? Where has either of us scope  
In this dead-dawning century that lacks all  
faith,  
All hope, all aim, and all the mystery  
That comforteth. Since he victorious  
With his cold vapours chills out you and me,  
The woman and the poet?

*He.* Never, dear.

For you and I remain,  
The woman and the poet. And soft rain  
Still falls and still the crocus flames,  
The blackbird calls.

*She.* But half the sweet is gone.  
The voices of our children at their games  
Lack half their ring.

*He.* Why, never, dear. Out there,  
The sea's a cord of silver, still to south  
Beyond the marsh

*She.* Ah, but beyond it all,  
And all beneath and all above, half of the  
glory's done.

And I and you. . . .

*He.* Why, no. The ancient sun  
Shines as it ever shone, and still your  
mouth  
Is sweet as of old it was.

*She.* But what remains?

*He.* All the old pains,  
And all the old sweet pleasures and the  
mystery

## *Grey Matter*

---

Of time, slow travel and unfathomed deep.

*She.* And then this cold extinction? . . .

*He.* Dreamless sleep.

*She.* And nothing matters?

*He.* All the old, old things.

Whether to Church or College  
    rings

The clamorous bell of creeds,

We, in the lush, far meads,

Poet and woman, past the city walls,

Hear turn by turn the burden of their calls,

Believe what we believe, feel what we feel,

Like what we list of what they cry within

Cathedral or laborat'ry,

Since, by the revolution of the wheel,

The one swings under, let us wait content.

*She.* Yet it is hard.

*He.* Ah, no. A sure intent,

    For me and you.

The right, true, joyful word, the sweet, true  
    phrase,

The calling of our children from the woods  
    these garden days

Remain.—These drops of rain have laid  
    the dust

And in our soft brown seed-beds formed  
    the crust

We needed for our sowings. Bring your  
    seed,

And you shall prick it in, I close the row.

Be sure the little grains your hands have  
    pressed

Tenderly, lovingly, home, shall flourish best.

## *Grey Matter*

---

*She.* Aye, you are still my poet.  
*He.* Even so  
Betwixt the rain and shine. Half true's  
still true  
More truly than the thing that's proved  
and dead.  
The sun lends flame to every crocus head  
Once more, and we once more must sow  
and weed  
Since in the earth the newly stirring seed  
Begins the ancient mystery anew.

## Old Man's Even Song

Tis but a teeny mite  
Hard, road side edge,  
Ol' missus' candle light  
Shines through thet broken hedge.

Reach me my coät, lads,  
Give me a lift into it,  
Rowin' they tater-clads  
Tasks me to do it  
Terribly ;  
Time was when I weer mad  
Diggin' by star's light,  
Now I am mortal glad  
T' reach my dure-ajar's light,  
'N' eat my tea.

Reach me my tööls, boys,  
Ah mun quit this talk 'n' lurry;  
Theer's my ol' missus' voice  
Calls : "Ol' meastur, hurry,  
Y'r tea-time's come."  
Smells from the chimney side  
Sniff down this plaguy mist,  
Wanst I'd wander far an' wide,  
Now I'm terr'ble stiff an' whist  
'N' stay at home.

### *Old Man's Even Song*

---

'Tis but a yeard or two  
    Hard road, thank God.  
Then off the hard an' goo  
    Home on the sod.

### **Children's Song**

SOMETIMES wind and sometimes rain,  
Then the sun comes back again;  
Sometimes rain and sometimes snow,  
Goodness, how we'd like to know  
Why the weather alters so.

When the weather's really good  
We go nutting in the wood;  
When it rains we stay at home,  
And then sometimes other some  
Of the neighbours' children come.

Sometimes we have jam and meat,  
All the things we like to eat;  
Sometimes we make do with bread  
And potatoes boiled instead.  
Once when we were put to bed  
We had nowt and mother cried,  
But that was after father died.

So, sometimes wind and sometimes rain,  
Then the sun comes back again;  
Sometimes rain and sometimes snow,  
Goodness, how we'd like to know  
Things will *always* alter so.

## From the Soil

(TWO MONOLOGUES)

### I

*The Field Labourer speaks.*

AH am a mighty simple man and only  
Good wi' my baggin' hook and sichlike and  
'tis lonely  
Wheer Ah do hedge on Farmer Finn his  
farm.

Often Ah gits to thinking  
When it grows dark and the ol' sun's done  
sinking,  
And Ah hev had my sheere  
Of fear  
And wanted to feel sure that God were near  
And goody warm—  
As near as th'eldritch shave I were at wark  
about . . .

Plenty o' time for thinking  
We hes between the getting up and sinking  
Of that ol' ~~sun~~—about the God we tark  
about . . .

In the beginning God made Heaven and  
The 'Arth, 'n Sea we sometimes hear a-  
calling

*From the Soil*

---

When wind she bloweth from the rainy land  
An' says ther'll soon be wet an' rain  
a-falling.

Ah'll give you, parson, God He made the sea,  
An' made this 'Arth, ner yit Ah wo-an't  
scrimmage

But what He made the sky; what passes *me*  
Is that what follows: "Then the Lord made  
we  
In His own image."

For, let alone the difference in us creatures,  
Some short o' words like me, and others  
preachers

With stores of them, like you ; some fair,  
some middlin',

Some black-avis'd like you and good at  
fiddlin',

Some crabb'd, some mad, some mighty gay  
and pleasant,

No two that's more alike than jackdaw is  
to pheasant,

We're poorish stuff at best.

We doesn't last no time before we die,  
Nor leave more truck behind than they  
poor thrushes.

You find, stiff feathers, laid aside the bushes  
After a hard ol' frost in Janu-ry.

Ol' crow he lives much longer,

Ol' mare's a de-al stronger

'N the hare's faster . . .

If so be God's like we and we like He  
The man's as good's his Master.

## *From the Soil*

---

You are a civil, decent-spoken man, Muss  
Parson.

'N' I don't think ye'll say this kind o' tark  
is worse'n arson—

That's burning stacks, I think—surely it  
isn' meant so,

I tell you, Parson, no ;

'N' us poor folk we doesn't want to blame  
You parsons fer the things that's said and  
sung

Up there in church. My apple tree is  
crook'd because 'twere bent so

When it were young.

'N' them as had you preacher-folk to  
tame,

Taught you the tales that you are bound to  
tell

Us folk below

About three Gods that's one an' Heav'n an'  
Hell,

An' things us folk ain't *meant* to under-  
stand.

I tell you, sir, we men that's on the land  
Needs summut we can chew when trouble's  
brewing,

When our ol' 'ooman's bad an' rent is due  
'N' we no farden,

'N' when it's late to sow 'n' still too wet to  
dig the garden,

Something as we can chew like that ol' cow  
be chewing.

Something told plain and something we  
gits holt on,

## *From the Soil*

---

—You need a simple sort o' feed to raise a  
colt on—  
We needs it, parson, life's a bitter scrim-  
mage,  
Livin' and stuggin' in the mud and things  
we do  
    Enow confound us ;  
We hain't no need for fear  
Of God, to make the living hardly  
worth . . .  
*You tell us, sir, that "God He made this  
Earth  
    In His own image"  
An' make the Lord seem near.  
So's we could think that when we come to  
die  
    We'll lie  
In this same goodly 'Arth, an' things goo  
on around us  
    Much as they used to goo.*

## II

### *The Small Farmer soliloquises.*

I wonder why we toiled upon the earth  
From sunrise until sunset, dug and delved,  
Crook-backed, cramp-fingered, making  
little marks  
On the unmoving bosoms of the hills,  
And nothing came of it. And other men  
In the same places dug and delved and  
ended

### *From the Soil*

---

As we have done ; and other men just  
there

Shall do the self-same things until the end.  
I wonder why we did it . . . Underneath  
The grass that fed my sheep, I often  
thought

Something lay hidden, some sinister thing  
Lay looking up at us as if it looked  
Upwards thro' quiet waters ; that it saw  
Us futile toilers scratching little lines  
And doing nothing. And maybe it smiled  
Because it knew that we must come to  
this. . . .

I lay and heard the rain upon the roof  
All night when rain spelt ruin, lay and  
heard

The east wind shake the windows when that  
wind

Meant parched up land, dried herbage,  
blighted wheat,

And ruin, always ruin creeping near  
In the long droughts and bitter frosts and  
floods.

And when at dawning I went out-a-doors  
I used to see the top of the tall shaft  
O' the workhouse here, peep just above the  
downs,

It was as if the thing were spying, waiting,  
Watching my movements, saying, " You  
will come,

Will come at last to me." And I am  
here . . .

*From the Soil*

---

And down below that Thing lay there and  
smiled ;  
Or no, it did not smile ; it was as if  
One might have caught it smiling, but one  
saw  
The earth immovable, the unmoved sheep  
And senseless hedges run like little strings  
All over hill and dale. . . .

## “The Mother”

A SONG-DRAMA.

### *Characters.*

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

THE MOTHER.

THE LITTLE BLADES OF GRASS.

THE LITTLE GRAINS OF SAND AND OF  
DUST.

SCENE.—*Just outside a great city. Battalions of staring, dun-coloured, brick houses, newly finished, with vacant windows, bluish slate roofs and yellow chimney pots, march on the fields which are blackened and shrouded with fog. Innumerable lines of railway disappear among them, gleaming in parallel curves. Fog signals sound and three trains pass on different levels; the lights in their windows an orange blur. A continuous hooting of railway engines. THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE, leaning on the brick parapet of the upper embankment, speaks towards THE MOTHER, who is unseen in the fog above the fields.*

*The Spirit of the Age.*

IT'S I have conquered you  
It is over and done with your green and  
over and done with your blue.

*“ The Mother ”*

---

Conquered you. Where is your sky ?  
Where is the green that your gown had  
of late ?

*The Mother.*

Wait.

*The Spirit of the Age.*

I have trampled you down, you must die.  
It is only begun  
Yet it's over and done  
With the green of your grass and the blue  
of your sky.  
Even your great constellations  
Blaze vainly, are hid by the dun  
Of the smoke of my fires. . . .

*The Mother.*

I wait ; I have patience.

*The Spirit of the Age.*

The smoke of my fires,  
The dun of the lives and desires  
Of the millions and millions who live  
And who strive.  
Only to trample you down, blot you out,  
foul your face and forget.

*The Mother.*

Ah, and yet.

[*The fog to the north lifts a little and  
discloses clouds of smoke like a pall  
above a forest of chimney stacks ; a  
square Board School playground where*

## *“ The Mother ”*

---

*children are running through puddles  
on the wet asphalt.*

### *The Spirit of the Age.*

And behold, they are toiling and moiling  
And soiling  
Your winds and your rains ; yea, and  
hark to the noise  
Of the girls and the boys  
Of untold generations.

### *The Mother.*

I wait. I have patience.

### *The Spirit of the Age.*

They play in the waters  
I grant them, the daughters  
Of fog-dripped smut-showers.  
Would they thank you for flowers  
Or know how to play by your Ocean's  
blown billows ?  
Who never met you,  
Whose sires forget you,  
These nations and nations  
Who never saw sea nor the riverside  
willows.

### *The Mother.*

I wait ; I have patience.

### *The Spirit of the Age.*

Old Silence, wait ; old Sleeper, use  
your patience.  
You are dead and forgotten

## *“ The Mother ”*

---

As a corpse that was rotten  
A twelvemonth and more ;  
As dead as the Empires of yore,  
As dead and forgotten.

*The Little Blades of Grass (whispering).*

Listen, listen.

*The Little Grains of Sand (whispering).*

Ah, we hear ; you'll see us glisten  
When the Wind shall set us whirling.

*The Spirit of the Age.*

I am here and I shall stay  
To the utter, utter day ;  
Tell me, you who've lived for ever,  
Saw you ever such a fever,  
Such a madness of gold-getting,  
Such forgetting  
Of the Thing that you called Truth—  
Such contempt, such lack of ruth,  
For your leisure and your dalliance,  
As since Time and I joined alliance ?  
I shall rule and falter never,  
You are dead and gone for ever.  
(He pauses. THE MOTHER says nothing.)

*The Little Blades of Grass (whispering).*

Are you there, O all ye others ?

*The Little Grains of Sand.*

We are here, O little brothers.

## *“ The Mother ”*

---

### *The Spirit of the Age.*

Old Silence, speak !  
I had not thought to find you half so weak  
In argument. Acknowledge I am he  
That ever more shall be.  
Be just ; confess that I have won  
And that your race is run.

[*She still keeps silence. He goes on, excitedly.*  
D'you think that I am frightened by your  
fools  
Who with their rules  
And rusty saws from musty stools  
In dusty schools,  
Squeak. “ In the very nature of the case,  
Unless the sequence of the immobile earth  
Shall change, the sun and tides stand still  
and all  
The vast phenomena of peoples, kings,  
And mighty Empires be for you reversed,  
That day must come when your world-  
sway declines ” ?

### *The Little Blades of Grass.*

Hearken, hearken :  
Brothers, are ye there ?

### *The Little Grains of Sand.*

Brothers, when that wind blows we shall  
darken  
All the air.

“*The Mother*”

---

*The Spirit of the Age.*

I heard another fool with : “Time shall come  
When the tired human brain,  
That now already reels,  
Shall utterly refuse to face again  
The turmoil and the hum  
Of all these wheels and wheels and wheels  
and wheels and wheels,  
This clattering of feet  
And hurrying no-whither; deem it sweet  
To lie among the grasses,  
Where no more shadow is than of the cloud  
that passes  
Beneath the sun.” Another squeaked of  
strife ;  
Of cataclysms, plagues ; and slackening  
grip on life,  
And pictured for us street on street on  
street  
Re-echoing to the feet  
Of one sole, panic-stricken passenger ;  
Pictured my houses roofless to the air,  
The windows glassless, doors with ruined  
locks,  
The owlet and the fox  
Sole harbourers there ;  
The only sounds hawks’ screaming, plover’s  
shriek  
Above the misted swamps ; the rivers burst  
Their banks and sweep, athirst,

### *“The Mother”*

---

My rotting City. . . . Horrid ! . . . Mother  
speak ;  
Speak, mother, speak, who are so old and  
wise.

*The Little Blades of Grass (tittering).*  
Ho, ho ! ho, ho !  
The braggart groweth tremulous.

*The Little Grains of Sand and of Dust.*  
Hallo ! hallo—o—o !  
He is afraid of us.

*The Spirit of the Age.*  
D'you think that I am frightened by these  
lies ?  
Old Dotard, I . . .  
I rule ; am come to stay  
For ever and a day.  
Behold,  
Where all my million lieges toil for grime  
and gold.

*[The fog lifts, suddenly. Against a  
shaft of pale, golden sky, one sees  
the immense City like a watery-  
edged silhouette. A great central  
dome, the outlines wet and gilded  
by the rays of light ; warehouses  
like black iron cliffs, square along  
a river ; black barges, with pale  
lights at the bows, creeping down  
the glassy yellow water ; forests of  
chimney stacks and of masts of  
shipping.*

*“ The Mother ”*

---

Answer, old witch ; old silent envier of my  
joy,  
I challenge you, old Hecate.

*The Mother (very softly).*

Where is Troy ?

*The Spirit of the Age.*

What's Troy compared to me ?

*The Mother.*

Where Carthage, Nineve,  
Where Greece, where Egypt, where are all  
that host  
Whose very names are lost ?

*The Little Blades of Grass (whispering).*

When we crave them,  
Then we have them.

*The Little Grains of Sand and of Dust.*

When the winds blow we o'er-ride them,  
And we hide them  
Silently.

*The Spirit of the Age.*

What were they all—all of them measured  
by me ?  
For never among the Nations  
And never between the Oceans,  
Were known such emanations

### *"The Mother"*

---

Of tense, strung-nerved emotions,  
Such strivings,  
Never such hivings  
Of humans . . .

#### *The Mother.*

Son, those cities of the plain and of the  
shore !  
My winds blew and their fleets were  
shattered,  
My waves raged their harbours a-choke ;  
A very little their strivings mattered,  
Little their tenseness ; their hivings broke  
For evermore.  
  
Little one, I who am young, furnished them  
graves and I sung  
Dirges above them. You have your  
millions,  
Men of all nations, I have my billions and  
billions and billions,  
Of those who are stronger than men ;  
whose persistence,  
Whose creeping on sods, and flight down  
the winds evades the last watch, over-  
powers the hopeless resistance.

#### *The Little Blades of Grass.*

Hearken, hearken :  
Brothers, are ye there ?

*The Little Grains of Sand and of Dust.*  
Brothers, when that wind blows we shall  
darken  
All the air.

## *“ The Mother ”*

---

### *The Mother.*

Son : when I turn in my slumber,  
Your cities withouten number  
Shall fall. . . . There shall remain upon  
the ground  
Rubble and rubbish ; a rising and settling  
of dust all around,  
Here and there a mound. . . .

And the grass will come a-creeping,  
And the sands come sifting, sweeping,  
Down the winds and up the current,  
Dry and dead and curst, abhorrent.  
Grass for the cities of the plains and of the  
hills ; sand and bitter dust for the cities  
of the shore.

Little one, I who am old, hid all those  
strivings of yore,  
Little one, I old and grey,  
Bid you play,  
Wrestle and worry and play in the folds of  
my dress,  
Till you tire, and the fire of your passions  
fails in your earth-weariness.  
Little one, I who am kind, give you time  
till you tire of your play,  
Time till you weary and say :  
“ Hold ; enough of our making-believe.  
Ah, children, leave striving and leave  
The little small things that we deemed  
Above price ; all the playthings that seemed  
Worth a world of contriving and strife.”

*"The Mother"*

---

When the glimmer of gold loses life  
And its weight groweth deader and deader,  
And no one shall crave to be leader,  
O'ermasterer, lord of the knife.

Little one, I who am wise, bid you go back  
to your play,  
Play the swift game thro' the day.  
When even comes you shall kneel down  
and pray,  
And, well-content, at last lay down your  
head  
Upon my ultimate bed  
And lose the tenseness of your futile quest  
In me who offer rest.

*(The fog sweeps down: the city disappears.  
The Spirit of the Age says in a low voice.)*

Poor wand'ring proser,  
Poor worn-out, mutt'ring dozer,  
With your old saws  
Of sempiternal laws,  
The day's to me not you . . .  
Strike down the old ; cry onwards to the  
new.

*[A train rumbles slowly past, going  
cautiously through the yellow fog.]*

*The Little Blades of Grass (whispering).*

Hearken, hearken :  
Brothers, are ye there ?

“ *The Mother* ”

---

*The Little Grains of Sand and of Dust*  
(whispering back).

Brothers, when that wind blows we shall  
darken  
All the air.

**CURTAIN**

## Wisdom

THE young girl questions : "Whether were  
it better  
To lie for ever, a warm slug-a-bed  
Or to rise up and bide by Fate and Chance,  
    The rawness of the morning,  
    The gibing and the scorning  
Of the stern Teacher of my ignorance ?"  
    " I know not," Wisdom said.

The young girl questions : " Friend, shall I  
die calmer,  
If I've lain for ever, sheets above the  
    head,  
Warm in a dream, or rise to take the  
    worst  
    Of peril in the highways  
    Of straying in the by-ways,  
Of hunger for the truth, of drought and  
    thirst ?"  
    " We do not know," he said,  
    " Nor may till we be dead."

## **The Posy-Ring**

**(AFTER CLEMENT MAROT)**

THIS on thy posy-ring I've writ :  
    "True Love and Faith"  
For, failing love, Faith droops her head,  
And lacking faith, why Love is dead  
    And's but a wraith.  
But Death is stingless where they've lit  
And stayed, whose names hereon I've writ.

### To Christina at Nightfall

LITTLE thing, ah, little mouse,  
Creeping through the twilit house,  
To watch within the shadow of my chair  
With large blue eyes ; the firelight on your  
hair  
Doth glimmer gold and faint,  
And on your woollen gown  
That folds a-down  
From steadfast little face to square-set feet.  
Ah, sweet ! ah, little one ! so like a carven  
saint,  
With your unflinching eyes, unflinching  
face,  
Like a small angel, carved in a high place,  
Watching unmoved across a gabled town ;  
When I am weak and old,  
And lose my grip, and crave my small  
reward  
Of tolerance and tenderness and ruth,  
The children of your dawning day shall  
hold  
The reins we drop and wield the judge's  
sword  
And your swift feet shall tread upon my  
heels,

*To Christina*

---

And I be Ancient Error, you New Truth,  
And I be crushed by your advancing  
wheels . . .

Good-night ! The fire is burning low,  
Put out the lamp ;  
Lay down the weary little head  
Upon the small white bed.  
Up from the sea the night winds blow  
Across the hill, across the marsh ;  
Chill and harsh, harsh and damp,  
The night winds blow.

But, while the slow hours go,  
I, who must fall before you, late shall wait  
and keep  
Watch and ward,  
Vigil and guard,  
Where you sleep.  
Ah, sweet ! do you the like where I lie  
dead.

### **Wife to Husband**

IF I went past you down this hill,  
And you had never seen my face before,  
Would all your being feel the sudden thrill  
You said it felt, once more?

If I went past you through this shaw,  
Would you be all a-quiver at the brush  
Of my trailed garments ; would the sudden  
hush  
You said the black-birds' voices had in awe  
Of my first coming, fall upon the place  
Once more, if you had never seen my face  
Nor ever heard my passing by before,  
And nought had passed of all that was of  
yore ?

## Two Frescoes

It occurred to me that a series of frescoes might arise dealing with the fortunes of Roderick the Goth. Having neither wall nor brushes I have tried to put two of them upon paper.

### I

#### THE TOWER

Down there where Europe's arms  
Stretch out to Africa,  
Throughout the storms, throughout the  
calms  
Of centuries it took the alms  
Of sun and rain ; the loud alarms  
Of war left it unmoved ; and grey  
And brooding there it watched the strip of  
foam  
And fret of ruffled waters, was the home  
Of the blue rock-dove and the birds o'  
the main.

Coming from Africa  
The swallows rested on it flying north  
In spring-time ; rested there again,  
When the days shorten, speeding on the  
way  
Homewards to Africa.

## *Two Frescoes*

---

Back and forth  
The tiny ships below sped ; east and west  
It was called blest  
By mariners it guided. Mystery  
Hung round it like a veil. The ancient  
    Ones,  
They said, had seen it rise  
Upwards to the old suns,  
Upwards to the old skies,  
When Hercules  
Did bid it guard those seas.

It was a thing of the Past ;  
Stood there untroubled ; like a virgin,  
    dreamed ;  
And not a man of all that land but deemed  
The tower sacred.  
It was a symbol of an ancient faith,  
Some half-forgotten righteousness, some  
    Truth,  
Some virtue in the land whose tillers said :  
“Whilst that stands unenforced, it is well.”  
Be sure the thing is even so to-day,  
Our tower doth somewhere unenforced rise  
Upwards to our old skies.  
And if we suffer sacrilegious hands  
To force its innocence, our knell shall ring  
As it rang out for them on that old day  
Knolling from Africa.  
You say it was the King who did this thing,  
Who sinned against this righteousness.

    But say :  
If we stand by and with averted eyes,

### *Two Frescoes*

---

Or, shrugging shoulders, let our rulers sin  
Against the very virtue of the race,  
Who is it then but us must bear the pains  
Of Nemesis? Ah, yes, it was the King. . . .

## *Two Frescoes*

---

### II

#### GOTHS

“LET the stars flame by as the flaming  
earth falls down,  
Ruined fall the earth as the clang ing  
heavens fall.  
Clasp me, love of mine ; be the jewels in  
my crown  
But the firelit tears of Gods, of the  
Ancient Ones of all.”

The swart King paced his palace wall  
And down below the maids at ball  
Sang in choir at evenfall  
As they played :

“ Make our couch of Greece and the foot-  
stool for our throne  
Of Rome, throw scented Spain for the  
incense of our fire,  
Bring me all the East for the jewels in my  
zone  
Cast them all together for our leaping  
wedding pyre.”

And he looked down  
Into their cloistral shade  
And saw, without the tongues of  
shadow thrown  
By wall and tree of that sequestered place  
One girl who had the sunlight on her  
face,  
Who swayed and clapped her hands  
and sang alone.

## *Two Frescoes*

---

“ My father can but die,” she sang,  
“ My mother can but weep,  
This weary town fall blazing down  
And be a smouldering heap  
Beneath the flame  
Where I was wont to keep  
My weary vigil till my lover came.”

Chanting in her pauses all the girls within  
the close  
Sang to her singing, and their hidden  
chorus rose  
Like a wave, fell like falling asleep.  
And for the King, her voice like fiery  
wine  
Set all his pulses throbbing and her face  
Did dazzle more than did the blood-red  
sun.

“ He who would win me, let him woo  
like this,  
Flames on his face and the blood upon  
his hands,  
Ravish me away when the blackening  
embers hiss  
As the red flesh weeps to the brands.”

That King was one who reignéd there  
alone  
Upon those very confines of the world,  
Where conquering races ebb to sloth and  
sink  
As still great rivers sink into the sands.

## *Two Frescoes*

---

And—for his fathers had been rav'ning  
wolves

Who coursed through ruin, pestilence and  
death

When all the world flamed red from end to  
end—

That ancient song of his destroying race  
The girl sang stirred the fibres of his frame  
Till all the earth was red before his face.

It had been so the women sang of old  
To his forgotten sires, and still they sang  
Within the shadow of his palace wall,  
The cloister of his grimmest liege of all.  
And as she sang the ferment worked in her  
And shook her virgin's voice to jarring  
notes.

Stirring in her the ancient cry of  
throats

Torn with the passions of the ancient  
days.

“Pour me blood o' gods ; bring me broken  
oaths for toys

Countless of the cost, of their ruin, of thine  
own ;

Drunk with wine and passion, drink thy  
moment's fill of joys,

Godlike, beastlike, manlike, drink and cast  
thy cup a-down ;

Lose thy life ; give thy crown,

Lose thy soul, give thine all,

As we sink to death and ruin with the  
smoke o' worlds for pall.”

## *Two Frescoes*

---

And so she raised her eyes and saw the King  
Stand frowning down, his face inspired with  
flame

Fro' the west'ring sun. And then the  
Angelus

Chimed out across the silent land of Spain.  
Beyond the strip of foam the imaums called,  
And Africa and Europe fell to prayer.

But those two gazing in each other's eyes  
Looked back into the hollows of the years.  
And as he stood above his brooding land  
It was as if she saw her sires again.

Flames shone upon his face and on his  
hands

Incarnadined ; whenas the sun sank down  
He raised his eyes and seemed to see that  
Spain

Was all on fire with blood upon the roofs.  
And down to South the inviolate, pallid  
tower

Rose silent, pointing to the crescent moon  
And that great peering planet called Sohél,  
That heralds, as Mahomet's doctors say,  
His domination and his children's sway,  
Rose over Africa.

### **Volkswise**

A POOR girl sat by a tower of the sea  
All a-wringing of her hands ; " Will he never  
    show," says she,  
" Just a token, just a glimmer of his ship's  
    lant . . . horn ? "

" Oh, all ye little grains of sand  
Twist into a rope shall draw his keel  
Hither. Oh, ye little gulls and terns,  
Join wings and bear me from this strand  
To where I'll feel  
His arms, and find where on the foam his  
    ship is borne."

*A poor girl sat, etc.*

" Oh, all ye little stars o' the night  
Come down and cluster in my hair ;  
Oh, bright night-flashes o' the waves  
Shine round me till I'm all one flame of light.  
So, far at sea,  
He'll deem a beacon beckons him to  
    me . . . "

*A poor girl sat nigh a tower of the sea  
All a-wringing of her hands ; " Will he  
    never show," said she,  
" Just a token, just a glimmer of his ship's  
    lant . . . horn ? "*

## And Afterwards

(A SAVAGE SORT OF SONG ON THE ROAD)

*“Once I was a gallant and bold I  
And you so tender and true,  
But I'll never again be the old I  
Nor you the old you.”*

I shall go lounging along on the edge  
Of the grass. . . . You'll loiter along by  
the hedge.

I shall go dogged through dust and the dirt  
Like an ass in my moods.

You with a new sweetheart at your skirt  
Ev'ry few roods. . . .

*“Once I was a gallant,” etc.*

We'll maybe jog along together  
A long way ;  
Maybe put up with the weather together,  
Better or worse  
As it chances day by day,  
Or maybe part with a kick and a curse  
I and you,  
After a turning or two. . . .

*“But I'll never again,” etc.*

## On a Marsh Road

(WINTER NIGHTFALL)

A BLUFF of cliff, purple against the south,  
And nigh one shoulder-top an orange pane.  
This wet, clean road ; clear twilight held in  
the pools,  
And ragged thorns, ghost reeds and dim,  
dead willows.

Past all the windings of these grey, forgotten  
valleys,  
To west, past clouds that close on one dim  
rift—  
The golden plains ; the infinite, glimpsing  
distances,  
The eternal silences ; dim lands of peace.

Infinite plains to know no wanderer's foot ;  
infinite distances where alone is rest ;  
All-virgin downs where none shall pasture  
sheep ; inviolable peaks that none shall  
climb,  
From whose summit nor you nor I shall gaze  
on oceans infinite beyond,  
Nor none look back upon this world folding  
to-night, to rain and to sleep.

## Perseverance D'Amour

### A LITTLE PLAY

*Time.*—Thirteenth Century.

*Place.*—In and near the City of Paris.

*Persons*—

ANSEAU DIT LE TOURANGEAU,  
Jeweller to the King.

TIENNETTE, daughter of a bondman  
of the Abbey of Saint Germain.

THE ABBOT OF SAINT GERMAIN,  
HUGON DE SENNECTERRE.

THE KING OF FRANCE.

THE QUEEN OF FRANCE.

THE KING'S CHAMBERLAIN.

A FAT BURGESS OF PARIS.

A THIN ONE.

A STRANGER.

Monks of the Abbey ; a Crowd, etc.,  
etc.

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

### SCENE I

ANSEAU DIT LE TOURANGEAU and TIENNETTE, meeting on a road in the Clerk's Meadow. The road has a grassy border, vines in the background and the roofs of the Abbey of Saint Germain. It is a Sunday at sunset, the Angelus ringing.

ANSEAU, a man of middle age, large, squarely built, richly dressed, black bearded, with a gold chain round his neck. Hanging from it the badge of the "Subjects of the King." He is a free man, and a burgess of the City of Paris.

TIENNETTE, a young girl, fair; dressed in sack-cloth with a rope girdle. She is leading a cow which browses in the ditch. They stand while the Angelus rings; then she passes ANSEAU without looking up; ANSEAU turns and looks after her.

*Ans.*                           A pretty pass,  
That I, a ten years' master jeweller,  
A burgess and a man of forty years  
Spent soberly in service of my craft  
Have not the courage for a mere "God-den"  
To such a petticoat. . . .

[He calls: "Ho-la" and beckons to  
TIENNETTE. She comes back  
slowly, leading the cow after her.

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

*Ans.* Ah, sweetheart, is your state so  
poor a one

That, on a Sabbath, in despite of law  
You come abroad to work. Have you no  
fear?

*Tien.* My lord, I have no fear; I am  
below

The notice of the laws and the Lord Abbot  
Doth give us licence thus to graze our cow  
After the hour of vespers.

*Ans.* Well, my dear,  
You set the welfare of your soulless beast  
Above the welfare of your little soul?

*Tien.* Our little souls, my lord? Our  
soulless beast  
Is more than half our lives and more than  
all

The little souls that we have never seen.

*Ans.* Why, then, you're passing poor. And  
yet you have  
Your jewels and the gold you carry with  
you.

Your eyes and hair; I would I had such  
gold.

Where are your lovers? You are near a  
city

Where what you have . . .

*Tien.* Nenny, my lord, I have . . .

[She holds out her left arm and shows  
him, on it, a silver band such as is  
worn by grazing cattle, but without  
the bell. ANSEAU raises his hands  
in horror.

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

*Ans.* A chattel of the Abbey's . . . .

*Tien.* Ah, my lord,  
I'm daughter to the Abbey's serf Etienne.  
Who marries me becomes—it makes no  
boot  
Though he be even burgess or more  
great—  
Becomes a bonded serf with me and falls  
Body and goods to the Abbey. If he love  
Withouten wedlock, then the children fall  
Again to the Abbey. . . . Were I ten times  
less  
Ill-favoured than I am, the most in love  
Would flee me like the plague.

*Ans.* And do you say  
That not a one, for love of your blue eyes  
And of your mouth and of your little hands,  
Did ever try to buy your liberty,  
As I bought mine o' the King ?

*Tien.* It costs too dear.  
It costs too dear, my lord. All those I  
please  
At meeting go away as they did come.  
It costs too dear.

*Ans.* And have you never thought  
Of seeking other lands on a good horse  
Behind a rider. . . .

*Tien.* Oh, one thinks . . . one thinks . . .  
But, sir, the Abbey's arms are very long.  
They'd hang me if they caught me, and the  
man,  
If he were noble, he must lose his lands ;  
If simple, life and all. I am not worth

## Perseverance D'Amour

---

Such stakes. Besides, I live in fear of  
God  
Who set me where I am.

*[She begins to drag the cow further  
along the road. ANSEAU stands  
silent. At last he says absent-  
mindedly :*

*Ans.* But then—your age?  
*Tien.* I do not know, my lord, but the  
Lord Abbot,  
They say, doth keep account. . . .

*Ans.* And what's your name?  
*Tien.* I have no name, my lord, my  
father was  
Baptiz'd Etienne, and so my mother was  
"The woman called Etienne," and as for  
me

They call me Tiennette, but I've no name.  
*Ans. (in the same tone).* Your cow, now,  
is a noble beast.

*Tien.* My lord,  
Her milk's the best of all the country side.  
If you do thirst . . . .

*Ans.* Why, no, I have no thirst  
That that could satisfy. Now listen you. . . .  
I am that Anseau called le Tourangeau,  
My fame is what it is, my work no worse.  
After my light I've lived and done my best,  
And I am wealthy past the middle wealth.  
I never followed women ; ev'ry night  
Your gallants passed my windows they have  
seen

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

My steadfast lamp behind the iron grilles,  
Have seen me bent above the shining gold  
Or black against my forge. I once was  
poor,

Now I am wealthy past the middle wealth.  
I am a man like other men, not worse  
And little better, not I think unkind  
Nor too much given to mirth. And so I've  
lived

Since I could wield a chisel of mine own.  
But now—I cannot tell you when or how,  
What set me thinking, how the thought  
increased—

I could not sleep at night, nor brace to  
work.

It may have been a month ; I do not know.  
Till, of a sudden, as small bubbles run  
To merge into one whole, the thought was  
there ;

I must be married, I must have some soul  
To share my joys with and to share my  
grieves,

And bear me little children. . . . Ever since  
That thought has been all me. I was to-  
day

Before the altar of Saint Eloy's church  
(The seven small gold saints and the large  
cross

Set with carbuncles are my proper work),  
And prayed that he would set within my  
path

A woman fitted for my prime of life.  
You see me ; this is I. The air's so hot

*Perseverance D'Amour*

---

Within the narrow streets I came out here  
Where I have never walked this seven  
years.

The little birds were singing down the sun  
The bell rang out and in the sacred minutes  
I saw you stand against me ; was it not  
An answer from the Saint ?

*Tien.* Alas, if but  
The price were not so great.

*Ans.* I've little skill  
In women, but there is a certain sound  
Comes from true metal ; I've a skill in that,  
And when I look at you and when you speak  
I seem to hear that sound.

*Tien.* If but the price  
Were not so great. I am not worth the tenth.  
You do not know. . . . I've little skill in  
men.

You frighten me a little ; what know I ?  
If there is any truth for such as I  
You seem to have that truth. If any  
goodness  
Is in the world for me, it seems in you.  
You should be strong and gentle, I am weak.  
I do not know; I say I do not know.  
Alas, alas . . .

[*She begins to weep softly.* ANSEAU  
crosses himself, joins his hands and  
says :

*Ans.* I make a vow to my Lord Saint Eloy,  
under whose invocation are all master  
jewellers, to invent two shrines of gilded  
silver of the finest work it shall be granted

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

to me to achieve. I make a vow to fill them, the one with a likeness of the Holy Virgin, to the end that if I achieve the liberty of my wife, she be glorified; the other for my patron Saint Eloy if only I have success in this my emprise. And I swear by my eternal salvation to persevere with courage in this affair, to spend in it all that I possess and to quit of it only with my life. So God help me, Anseau dit le Tourangeau.

[TIENNETTE has sunk upon her knees;  
ANSEAU bends and raises her. The  
cow has moved slowly up the side of  
the ditch and is browsing on the  
vines.

*Tien.* Alas, alas . . .  
You did not know. You must take back  
your vow.

I could love you all my life. Alas, alas . . .

*Ans.* The vow is said; there is no taking  
back.

*Tien.* You do not know, alas, you do not  
know. . . .

[She runs to the cow as the scene closes.

END OF SCENE I

SCENE II

*[Paris. A place in front of the Church of St Luke. A great crowd of burgesses, their wives, children, pedlars, friars and pages is round the house of Maître ANSEAU.]*

*A STRANGER; a FAT BURGESS; his WIFE; a THIN BURGESS; his MOTHER.*

*The STRANGER, a man in parti-coloured hose, with one hanging sleeve torn and hanging by a thread, a peaked red beard, two peacock's feathers held by a brooch to a hat that has a long flap in front. He struggles out of the crowd and salutes the FAT BURGESS, who has his wife upon his arm.*

*The Stranger.* Sir, I beseech you, sir, I am but very newly come to this town. Sir, I beseech you, tell me how I may come to the house of one (*he reads from a paper*) Maître Anseau, dit le Tourangeau.

*The Fat Burgess.* That, sir, is the house, of stone, beside the church. But if you would come to it, you must even fly like the birds of heaven.

*The Crowd.* Maître Anseau . . . Maître Anseau.

*The Stranger.* Sir, I am newly come to this town. The Lord Percy is to wed, sir, and having a mind to—the Lord Percy of Northumberland—present his transcendent

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

bride with a jewelled stomacher, and hearing of the surpassing skill of this Maître Anseau, sent me, sir, his gentleman, sir. . . .

*The Crowd.* Maître Anseau, Maître An...seau! Cracked be all shaven skulls . . . we will tear down the Abbey . . . we will . . .

*The Stranger.* And so, sir, if your master be so well be-customed, it beseems me, sir, to think that my worshipful Lord will scarce be suited, nor his transcendent bride be stomachcheder, this many days.

*The Crowd.* Hurrah, hurrah! Be of good cheer. For the glory of Paris be skulls cracked!

*The Stranger.* I have been torn as if by wild beasts. Behold me . . .

*The Fat Burgess.* Sir, it would seem that you know not the lamentable story. It is in this way, sir . . .

*[His voice is lost in the noise of the crowd. He can be seen gesticulating. The THIN BURGESS interrupts him. They discuss in dumb show; the wives join the discussion. Then a lull.]*

*The Fat Burgess.* And so, sir, the King's Chamberlain, owing our Master great sums for a pouncet-box set in union stones . . .

*The Thin Burgess.* Neighbour, you mislead. I have it from Maître Anseau himself.

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

The pouncet-box was paid for. It was out of the great love the Chamberlain bore our master . . .

*The Fat Burgess.* Well, be it as you will, neighbour. For love or debt the King's Chamberlain hies him with Maître Anseau to the Abbot. And the crafty Abbot . . .

*The Crowd.* Pestilence carry off Abbot Hugon . . . May the plague take him off ere he take one of our free burgesses for a serf.

*The Fat Burgess.* This crafty Abbot will not abate one jot ; but sitteth as mum as a fox in a drain. The Master offereth great fortunes for this wench. But the Abbot will have him for serf if he marry her thinking to gain for the Abbey the incomparable skill of . . .

*The Thin Burgess.* Neighbour, you mistake. It is a matter of principle.

(*To the Stranger*). Sir, the thing is thus. This Abbot would enslave all us free burgesses and he makes with our Master a beginning. He hath other wenches for all us burgesses. . . .

*The Wife of the Thin Burgess.* Oh, the guile, the guile. . . .

*The Fat Burgess.* Principle or no principle, the matter stands thus. Maître Anseau going again to the Clerk's Meadow finds there no Tiennette. For, sir, our 'prentices having planned to carry her off in their despite, these wicked priests did have

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

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her clapped up close. Since which time our Master hath been suffered to see her only through a little grille. . . .

*The Thin Burgess.* See the craft of it. This is to whet his appetite.

*The Fat Burgess's Wife.* Oh, sir, they say it be pitiful to see them there. They do buss the bars of each side and the tears do run, do run like juice from a roasting capon. A did use to be a lusty man and now A's grown so pale, so pale. . . .

*The Fat Burgess.* He eats not . . .

*The Thin Burgess.* Sleeps not.

*The Fat Burgess.* Does no work . . .

*The Thin Burgess.* Sighs and groans.

*The Fat Burgess.* Raves and swears . . .

*The Thin Burgess.* And the crux of the matter is: to-day he shall make his final choice, whether to have the Tiennette and a serf's life, or leave her and take to . . .

*A Loud Voice.* The King has gone to the Abbey. . . .

*The Crowd.* Maître Anseau. Maî . . . tre An . . . seau. . . .

*The Thin Burgess.* The King, sir, doth owe our Master great sums and shall intercede for him. . . .

*The Fat Burgess.* I do wager ten yards of white velvet to a bodkin he do leave her go her way and he his.

*The Wife of the Thin Burgess.* I do wager fourscore and two of my fatting capons he do have her. . . .

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

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*The Voice again.* The King has gone to the Abbey. . . .

*The Crowd.* Maître Anseau . . . Maître Anseau. . . .

*The Fat Burgess.* Be it a wager . . . .

*The Wife of the Thin Burgess.* Be it a wager and shake hands upon it. . . .

*[A great uproar behind; the crowd sways backwards and forwards, then opens. Maître ANSEAU is seen to be mounting a white jennet from the steps of his house.*

*The Crowd.* To the Abbey, to the Abbey . . . (They run off.)

*The Stranger.* I shall be killed; I shall be killed. . . . My hat is gone.

END OF SCENE II

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

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### SCENE III

*[The Great Hall in the Abbey of Saint Germain. To L. very large doors, opened and showing through their arches an apple close, red apples lying in heaps on the turf below whitened tree trunks. Facing the doors the Abbot's chair. Swallows fly in and out among the gilded beams of the tall roof.*

*The ABBOT HUGON, Monks, Cross-bearer. Behind—The Crowd, Soldiers of the Abbey, King's Soldiers ; Afterwards—Bondsmen of the Abbey.*

*The ABBOT HUGON, a very old man. His shaven face, very brown, small and dried, hangs forward on his breast, a richly-jewelled mitre pressing it down. He is seated in his chair facing the open doors. The Monks are round his chair which stands high on stone steps.*

*The Crowd is being pressed in place at the back of the hall by the Soldiers of the Abbey, who set their halberd staves across the faces. The King's Soldiers look on laughing. A great uproar. A flourish of trumpets sounds without ; the ABBOT is assisted to his feet and gives the benediction towards the doors.*

*Enter the KING OF FRANCE. He rides a black stallion into the hall ; the QUEEN in a white litter borne by two white*

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

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*mules. The curtains of the litter and the clothes of the mules are sewn with golden fleur-de-lis, the mules are shod with gold. A train of lords and ladies follow them. The KING'S CHAMBERLAIN comes to stand by the head of the King's horse.*

*The Crowd.* The King . . . the King.  
Do you see the King? . . . Now the Queen.  
Ah . . . h . . . h . . .

[*The KING salutes the ABBOT who blesses him again. Their lips can be seen to move, but what they say is lost in the exclamations of the Crowd. . . . The KING bends to speak to his CHAMBERLAIN, who exit. The QUEEN puts her head out of the litter.*

*The Crowd.* The Queen. . . . Do you see the Queen? . . . Ah . . . h . . . h . . .

[*The CHAMBERLAIN returns with ANSEAU DIT LE TOURANGEAU, who kneels in the space between the KING and the ABBOT.*

*The Crowd (a great cry).* Ha, Maître Anseau, Maître Anseau. A free man. No serf . . . no serf. . . .

[*It grows silent. The voice of the KING is heard as if continuing a speech.*

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

*The King.* Be of courage, man.  
My lord the Abbot will have need of us  
Upon a day.

*The Crowd.* Huzza . . . hear the King  
. . . the King. . . .

*The King.* For, in the end, we are the  
King of France.

If what men say be true we are more poor  
Than you are. Therefore courage, man,  
look up.

Set a high price and with a smiling face  
Cast down that price. Lord Abbot, name it  
him,  
He's stores of gold, they say. Now, Master,  
rise.

Stand up, man, and unpouch. Lord Abbot,  
name

The lowest ransom.

*The Abbot.* Sire, the price is fixt.

*The Crowd.* Strangle that Abbot. Cast  
him down to us.

*The Abbot.* The price is fixt. There is one  
only price.

I am the servant of the Abbey's fame,  
Glory, renown and ancient heritages.  
Our statutes fix the price, I can no more.  
We live in troublous times ; the breakers  
roar

Against the ship o' the Church; the times  
are evil ;

And I a feeble, poor old man who stand  
By the grace of God at the helm. What  
would you have?

## Perseverance D'Amour

---

To bate one jot of our enforced rights  
Were to cast down into that raging sea  
One of the sails we trust to for our voyage  
And final harbouring. The price is fixt.

*The Crowd.* Let us unfix it. Cast him  
down to us.

*The King.* You hear him, Master?

*Ans.* Oh, I hear him, sire.

*The King (to his Chamberlain).* You  
should be famous to defeat the  
laws,

To find out quibbles ; cheat the statutes'  
due.

What say you?

*The Chamberlain.* Sire, I can but what  
I can.

The Abbot is too strong ; 'tis manifest  
That he who's certain of the whole would  
be

Ill skilled at bargaining to take a part.

The Abbot's case is that. And for the  
rest :

I've argued with our Master ; I have said :  
"Good Master, think, the world is very  
large,

And full t'o'erflowing of dames passing  
fair."

I've told him that the tenth part of his  
goods

Would purchase him the name of noble-  
man,

Another tenth a lady to his bed,  
The noblest and the fairest in the land.

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

What would you have? The man is made  
of iron  
And will not bend ; the Abbot will not break,  
And I have wasted breath.

*The King.* Good madam Queen,  
Entreat my lord the Abbot for these  
lovers.

*The Queen.* My lord, I've done a many  
things for you,  
Have broidered copes, have made my ladies  
sew  
Your altar cloths with pearls. Beseech you  
now  
Have pity on these lovers.

*The Abbot.* Oh, fair Queen,  
In that I am a man I pity them.  
In that I am God's servant I must shut  
My eyes, my ears, my heart. Since there  
have been  
An abbey in this place, and monks and  
bondsmen—  
As who should say : Through all the mists  
of time,  
It hath not been decreed that there should  
fall  
A burgess of the city to the Abbey.  
If now this precedent should be despised  
There would not . . .

*The Queen.* Oh, a truce to precedent.  
What is this wench? A girl who leads a  
cow ;  
In sackcloth. Doth the honour of the  
Abbey

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

## Depend on girls in sackcloth?

*The Queen.* Depends on girls in sackcloth !

Good, my lord Abbot, I had thought you  
wise,

Old learned Churchmen had had better  
wits.

What you? a man of three-and-ninety

years  
Who by the very nature of your vows  
Are closed out from love . . . to say a  
wench.

That leads a cow is necessary to  
The honour of your Abbey ! . . .

*The Abbot.*      *Lady Queen,*  
I am an old man ; doting I do say :  
This wench that leads a cow is necessary  
To the honour of our Abbey. . . .

*The King.* Gentle wife,  
You have the Abbot on the hip, but  
sweet.

A-meanwhiles our good Master kneels on  
thorns.

Lord Abbot, make an end ; produce this  
wench.

This Helen that doth rive our world in  
twain,

And let our Master make his utter choice.

[At a sign from ABBOT HUGON, four-

*and-twenty acolytes issue out from*

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

*behind the chair. They strew white rose petals upon the steps until it is like a hill of snow. Enter TIENNETTE.*

*The Crowd.* Ah . . . h . . . h . . .

*[TIENNETTE is dressed like a maiden-queen in white, with a white coif sewn with gold, with a girdle of silver filigree, with white gloves embroidered with pearls. The ABBOT HUGON beckons to her to mount the steps to him. She does so.*

*The King (to Maître Anseau).* Nay, man, hadst needs be wealthier than we

To set a price on her that led your cow.

*[To the Abbot.]* If you will do us favour in this thing

We shall requite you. We are France and Paris. . . .

*The Crowd.* Paris and France! . . .

*The King.* And France and Paris have been touchéd home

By fortunes of these lovers. . . . Hear us roar! . . .

*The Crowd.* Paris and France!

*The Abbot.* Ah, sire, what would you do?

You touch yourself by melling in this thing.

If we should blench to this unquiet mob

### *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

They would gain strength from broken precedent

Which is a dyke against this hungry sea  
Wherein a breach being made, the sea  
sweeps in

And overwhelms us . . . overwhelms all  
France,

The Abbey and the Court. . . .

*The Crowd.* Paris and France.

*The King (to them).* Nenny, ye lend the  
Abbot similes

That are not pleasant savoured. Master,  
speak . . .

[*Maitre ANSEAU has risen to his feet  
and advances towards the ABBOT  
holding out his arms.*]

*The Queen (to her ladies).* She's fair;  
why, yes, I think she's fair to see.  
She halts a little. But she's fair, she's  
fair.

*Ans.* Oh, Father Abbot, oh, you man of  
God,  
If you have any pity in your heart,  
If you have any hope of rest to come,  
Bethink you, oh, bethink you. It grows late,  
You stand upon the very verge of the  
shade

Death casts upon us. I do know the law  
And I have made a vow. But, man of God,  
The thing is in your hands. For me remains  
No choice. The verdict lies with you. For  
me . . .

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

I have been poor, and I have been a  
bondsman,  
And I am patient, oh ! and I can bear.  
But oh, you man of God, take heed, take  
heed.

If you have ever seen a little child,  
And if your frozen eyes have thawed to  
see

The sunlight on the little children's faces,  
Bethink you of the curse you cast upon  
The children that that maid shall bear to  
me.

I have no choice, I made the vow to God  
And I fulfil it. But the little children . . .  
Have you the heart to let them live that  
life,

Un-named, unknown, to live and die as  
beasts

That perish ; all those tender little things  
That God doth mean should burgeon in  
the light

And with their little laughter sing His  
praise.

*The Abbot.* I am a very ancient man, and  
stand  
Within the shadow, and I stand and say :  
The price is fixt.

*Ans.* Accursed rat o' the Church,  
The price is fixt . . . is fixt. Oh, horrible,  
Insensate thirst for gold. Then, oh, thou  
man,

Thou spider gorging on the brink of hell,  
Suck up my gold, my life. But oh, I keep

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

The better part of me, you cannot touch  
The subtle engine God hath pleased to fix  
Within my brain, you cannot use the skill  
That made me what I am. And that I  
swear  
Not torture, not the rack, not death itself  
Shall set in motion. All your Abbey's rents  
For twice a hundred years could never  
pay  
What it shall lose thereby. I am more  
strong  
Than iron's hard, and more long-suffering  
Than grief is great. For you I might have  
been  
A fashioner of things divine ; for you  
I shall be but a pack-horse.

[TIENNETTE, who had covered her face with her arms, stretches out her arms to ANSEAU.

*Ans.* I cannot go my way;  
I have no way but only this with you.  
*Tien.* There is a way that God hath  
shown to me—

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

These last few weeks they have been  
schooling me

Within their cloisters—and there is a way,  
By which, if you do love me more than all,  
You shall enjoy me and go free in the end.  
For this the law is—they have told me so—  
If I should die before a child is born,  
You should go free though losing house  
and store,

The occasion of your serfdom being dead.

And oh, my lord and life,  
You shall. But for my sin of laying hands  
Upon myself, full surely the Lord God  
Shall pardon me, full surely the Lord God  
Shall pardon who doth know and weigh all  
hearts.

[*The ABBOT lays his hand upon her arm.*

*The Crowd.* You shall not hurt her ; we  
will have you down.

Old Spider . . . Rat o' the Church.

*The King.* Ah, make an end,  
Lord Abbot, for our dames have eyes all  
wet.

*The Abbot.* The price is fixt.

*Ans.* And I must pay the price.

*The Crowd.* You shall not ; no, you shall  
not. We are the free burgesses of Paris.

[*The ABBOT HUGON beckons Maître  
ANSEAU to come up to him. He  
slowly ascends the steps. The  
thurifers draw round, and a cloud  
of incense goes up. The Monks*

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

*chant and the KING removes his beaver. The QUEEN and her ladies cross themselves.*

*A great uproar in the hall; the Soldiers of the Abbey are thrown down and the Crowd breaks through; the King's Soldiers force it back. The sound of bells comes in from without. Enter the Bondsmen of the Abbey bearing a canopy. The ABBOT is seen blessing ANSEAU and TIENNETTE. Afterwards they go down the steps together. A Monk beckons them to stand beneath the canopy which has gold staves with little silver bells. During this wedding there has been a constant clamour. Now it falls silent.*

*The Abbot.* Anseau, thou serf and bondsman of our Abbey,  
Acknowledge that thy goods and life are ours.

*Ans.* I do acknowledge it.

*The Abbot (to the Bondsmen).* Bare ye his arm.  
Up to the elbow. Armourer, set thou on  
This bondsman's wrist the shackle of his state.

[*The Armourer rivets a silver collar upon the arm of ANSEAU. Whilst he is doing it the ABBOT descends the steps and comes to them.*

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

*The Abbot.* My hands are very feeble, I am old.

(*To Tiennette.*) Give me some help, thou wife of the new bondsman.

[*The ABBOT HUGON undoes the collar from the arm of ANSEAU.*

*The Crowd.* Ah . . . h . . . h . . . What is this? What is this?

*The Abbot (to Maitre Anseau).* Thou art a master jeweller. Hast skill To break the collar from thy new wife's arm And not to hurt her?

[*ANSEAU stands as if amazed. The ABBOT frees TIENNETTE.*

Lo, thou burgess's wife, How is it, to be free?

*The Crowd.* What? . . . what? . . . what? What is this? . . . Are they free?

[*As the curtain falls ANSEAU and TIENNETTE stand as if amazed. The monks raise their hands in horror.*

END OF SCENE III.

*Perseverance D'Amour*

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THE AFTER SCENE

[*The chamber of the ABBOT. A bare, small, white-washed room. On the floor, in a broad ray of sunlight that falls from the barred windows, stand two great gilt shrines. The door of the one is closed; through the half-opened doors of the other one sees an image of the Virgin in the likeness of TIENNETTE having a little child upon her arm and a cow kneeling at her feet.*

*The ABBOT; Two Religious.*

*The ABBOT lies with his eyes closed upon a narrow pallet, a black rosary falling from his clasped hands. The Two Religious stand motionless, their heads covered by their cowls, at his feet.*

*A long silence in which is heard the cooing of a blue pigeon on the windowsill. The ABBOT opens his eyes.*

*The Abbot. So ye are there; I sent for you.*

*The end*

*Is very near me now.*

[*He makes a weak gesture with one hand as if pointing to the shrines.*

*You see those things?*

*What say you, brothers, did I dote? I know,*

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

I say I know, have known this many months  
What you have whispered in the refectory.  
"The Abbot dotes," you said, "The Abbot dotes" . . .  
You said I doted; that my heart was touched  
By whimperings of lovers. One of you  
Shall step into my shoes a short day hence.  
Oh, let your dotage work as well as mine  
For honour of the Abbey; do but once  
One-half of what I did in this one thing!  
You said I doted, that my heart was touched.  
Nenny, I have a heart, but I am old  
And very cunning. I have seen more things  
Than most. And I do know my world, I say.  
You would have kept him, you. My heart  
was touched,  
In happy hour, I say, my heart was touched,  
Mine that has nursed the Abbey's honour here  
As mothers nurse their babes. You would have held  
The letter of the law and raised a storm  
That had cast down our house. . . . The burgesses  
Do love us now; this twelvemonth they have brought  
More offerings than in a lustre past.

*Perseverance D'Amour*

---

You would have kept the law and raised a  
storm  
That must have shorn us of one-half the  
rights  
We have upon the city. I did know  
That, in the acclamations of my mercy  
The collar I have set upon their necks  
Would gall no withers, yet the precedent  
Be riveted. And there is more than this  
I gained whose heart was touched by  
lovers' tears.  
It brought us these two shrines. I tell you,  
men,  
I prophesy, who lie at the point of death,  
That when all precedents are swept away,  
And you and I and all of us become  
A little dust that would not fill a cup,  
These shrines shall be the glory of the  
Abbey,  
Its chiefest profit and most high renown.  
For men shall marvel at the handiwork,  
And women tell the story at their work,  
And crossed lovers come from all the lands  
To make their offerings and shed salt tears  
Unto the saints that let their hearts be  
moved  
By these two lovers of the time before.  
I prophesy,  
Upon the point of death, I know my world,  
I have been in it for a mort of years. . . .  
And one of you shall step into my shoes.  
You stand there thinking it; I know my  
world.

## *Perseverance D'Amour*

---

*[He closes his eyes, then opens them and looks at the image of the Virgin.]*

Oh, blessed child upon thy mother's arm,  
Remember when our Brotherhood is  
tried. . . .

*(To the Religious).* Go, get ye to your  
whisperings again  
And say I doted. . . .

Brothers, go with God.  
Send me a little wine and let me sleep.

*[He closes his eyes again. Exeunt  
the Religious. The blue pigeon  
flies from the window-sill. Its  
wings clatter in the stillness.]*

## An End Piece

CLOSE the book and say good-bye to every-  
thing ;  
Pass up from the shore and pass by byre  
and stall,  
—For the smacks shall sail home on the  
tail of the tides,  
And the kine still stand deep in the sweet  
water sides,  
And they still shall go burying, still wedding  
brides,  
But I must be gone in the morning.  
One more look, and so farewell, sweet  
summering,  
One moment more and then no more at all,  
For the skipper shall summon his hands to  
the sea,  
And the shepherd still shepherd his sheep  
on the lea,  
But it's over and done with the man that  
was me,  
As over the hill comes the morning.







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